

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1. The Omnipresence of Competition

Princeps litterarum Homerus. Pliny the Elder's assessment of Homer (*HN* 2.13) is broadly representative, but in the case of *eris* primacy goes to Hesiod. Although Homer offers some striking commentary on strife in his epics, it is Hesiod's *Works and Days* account of the two Erides, one harmful and one beneficial, that has been crucial for almost all later discussions.¹ By splitting the goddess into two separate (almost psychological) entities Hesiod presents her as the expression of polarisation itself.² The drive to differentiate between good and bad strife, and consequently between positive and negative evaluations of competition in a broader sense, is central to our volume.³ Its title is 'Eris vs. *aemulatio*', but it would also have been possible to call it 'Eris vs. *eris*', for in the papers presented here competition appears in various forms that are differentiated not by their cultural context in the ancient world—Greek vs. Roman—but by their cultural value.

¹ For a general treatment of Eris in Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek historiographers see Thalmann 2004.

² Darthou 2008, 272: 'une divinité construite en polarité et expression d'une polarité'.

³ See, for example, Oostenbroek 1977, who identifies two separate traditions of ancient discourse about Eris: a poetic one and a philosophical-scientific one.

It is hardly necessary to argue for the relevance of the topic of competition in the field of classical studies. On the contrary, competition is everywhere in the Greco-Roman world. The following list, far from complete, suggests its range. The Roman aristocracy in republican times was endlessly competitive in pursuit of political authority and glory (in fact Caesar's famous dictum that he was 'harder to push from the first rank to the second than from the second to the last', quoted by Suetonius, *Iul.* 29.1, is not so exceptional within the superlative-laden self-presentation of Roman aristocrats).⁴ Philosophers including Plato and Aristotle developed critiques of the omnipresent competition in the society that surrounded them; thus Plato's attempt to control strife by virtue, i.e., to root out 'bad' Eris and to retain only the competition for *aretê*, fits the general interest of fifth- and fourth-century Athenian society, which understood the importance of competition for the functioning of their democracy but also feared the possibility of strife getting out of control and leading to internal struggle or even civil war (*stasis*).⁵ Religion was an important place of agonistic rivalry, not only when new cults were imported (as is attested in Euripides' *Bacchae* or Rome's struggles with the cult of Magna Mater) but also in the combative invective deployed between pagan and Christian thinkers in late antiquity.⁶ Literary texts from all periods struggled with their models in order to emulate them, which makes competition one of the most creative literary concepts of all times.⁷ Greek drama is defined by its agonistic

⁴ Cf., e.g., Neel 2014, who argues for the centrality of doublings and dyadic competition in Roman historiography about the (early) republic as a means both to acknowledge and mitigate competition ('a way to think about competition that was at the same time free from competition itself', 237).

⁵ Cf., inter alia, Ober 2008, esp. 80-117 (ch. 3: 'Competition, Scale, and Varieties of Knowledge').

⁶ See two recent volumes: Engels and Van Nuffelen (eds.) 2014, and Des Rosiers and Vuong (eds.) 2016.

⁷ See, among innumerable examples, Collins 2004, esp. 63-163 for an instructive overview of differences between rhapsodic and symposiastic competition, and the important study of Griffith 1990; for Roman poetry see, e.g., Barchiesi 1991. Ch. 5 in the seminal book by Hinds 1998 deals with authorial self-fashioning via

performance context and (if we think of Aristophanes' comedies) became an important medium in which to reflect on the social energy of strife.⁸ Artists and poets competed with each other to win the favor of the audience and—more specifically—the patronage of the upper class or ideally the ruler.⁹ Art itself was closely connected with the theme of competition: a substantial percentage of the numerous statues that stood in imperial Greek or Roman cities were those of successful athletes, another group being those of triumphant generals and other members of the elite who had earned them as prizes in their competition for glory.¹⁰ Festivals and public games with their acclaimed contests are a well studied and obvious kind of competition with a primarily positive evaluation in antiquity,¹¹ but festival competition also served as a metaphor structuring discourse in other 'arenas', among them sophistic rhetoric in classical Greece.¹² And the vectors of competition ramify when Greek and Latin intellectuals of the imperial period known as the 'Second Sophistic' compete with each other in the act of competing with the models of a classical period.¹³

intertextuality; ch. 5 (on 'writing as social performance') in Habinek 1998 is concerned with competitive self-fashioning through publishing one's texts. See also below on the creative and cohesive potential of competition in literary production.

⁸ On Aristophanes see Biles 2011.

⁹ See Nauta 2002.

¹⁰ See for a broad overview Smith 2012.

¹¹ See, *inter alia*, Christesen and Kyle (eds.) 2014; Coleman and Nelis-Clément (eds.) 2012, and Fisher 2009 for a succinct summary of the infrastructure of competition and its development in archaic and classical Greek culture.

¹² See Poulakos 1995, 32-46.

¹³ Schmitz 1997, 97-135 is seminal for the Second Sophistic. For a more critical, almost Platonic, view of the utility of competition in imperial Greek literature see Stadter 2011 (on Plutarch); on Plutarchan *philotimia* more generally see the volume edited by Roskam, De Pourcq, and Van der Stockt (eds.) 2012.

Given the omnipresence of competition in the Greco-Roman world, its salience as a topic for scholarly investigation shows surprising fluctuations. If one searches for the English term “competition” in the *Année philologique*, for example, 44 of the 368 hits date from before 1980, 269 are from after 1990. Christoph Ulf (2011), after sketching the huge impact the concept had on 19th-century philology,¹⁴ shows how it lost the attention of 20th-century scholarship, especially in the English-speaking world, and only regained influence in the 1980s. In the last fifteen years, in addition to numerous studies on competition in individual authors, genres, institutions, or contexts (some of which are mentioned en passant in this introduction), several important collected volumes have appeared, which—like the present volume—examine competition in broader temporal and spatial contexts and pave ways for a new understanding of the dynamics of competition in antiquity.

The volume edited by Nick Fisher and Hans van Wees (2011) is especially useful for the anthropological focus of Hans van Wees’ introduction, which encompasses more than the traditional purview of classics and includes discussions of African societies and Neolithic large-scale architecture. He concludes that one can move beyond economic or political models in explaining the competitive structures of ancient societies, and suggests instead that ‘competitiveness is essentially social, and that its primary goal is superior status’ (24).

As its title *La pomme d’Éris* suggests, the volume edited by H  l  ne M  nard, Pierre Sauzeau, and Jean Fran  ois Thomas (2012) concentrates on the conflictual aspects of competition as manifest in language, concept, story, and between and within ancient societies, Greco-Roman and beyond. A topic treated by many of the *Pomme d’  ris* papers of

¹⁴ Ulf thinks that John Stuart Mill’s utilitarian theories are foundational for this interest, a fascination that culminates in Jacob Burckhardt’s influential *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, in which the concept of the ‘agonal’ is defined as the core of Greek society.

particular relevance for the present volume, with its interest in the mechanisms by which competition is constrained, is the return to harmony and *homonoia* after conflict.

A decade earlier David Konstan and Keith Rutter (2003) edited a volume of studies on the emotions that trigger rivalry and competition, namely, envy, spite, and jealousy. Its essays explore these emotions in Greco-Roman philosophical doctrine, literary depiction, and oratorical deployment, and with attention to the question of their universality.

For a broad overview of how the concept of competition has been used in historical analysis one can now turn to *Konkurrenz in der Geschichte. Praktiken, Werte, Institutionalisierungen* (2014), edited by Ralph Jessen, to which Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp contributes a useful essay—both general and easily applicable to the ancient world—focused on competitive practices, *mores*, and institutions. Of particular note is the volume’s interest in the spread of an economic perspective on competition beyond the market to other areas of human endeavor.

The first sentence of Hans van Wees’ (2011, 1) above-mentioned authoritative introduction to ancient competition is ‘Competition divides people’. This beginning might seem to imply that, no matter whether societies foster competition or discourage it (*ibid.* 28), the outcome is always a rupture of social cohesion. Yet it remains disputable whether this is true for all kinds of ancient competition and in all respects. Institutionalized competitions, for example, such as the dramatic *agônes* at Athens, or spectacular Roman funerals with processions and tombs that try to outdo those of other families, may divide the competitors, but they also display shared values and encourage a sense of community in the audience. Van Wees himself acknowledges this fully and eventually describes competition as part of the sociability of humans in general (*ibid.* 6).

When it comes to the classical Greco-Roman world, literary texts are the primary (but by no means only) sources that reveal the sociability that is achieved through competition.

However, literature does not only (implicitly or explicitly) reflect competition, it is also profoundly competitive itself. So it is worth stressing that the interactions between texts and their ‘surrounding’ culture are by no means unidirectional. Instead, ever since Foucault’s discourse analysis, literature has been described as a formative part of culture in that it is, in the words of Leslie Kurke, ‘a domain of contest and negotiation.’ Or, put differently: texts shape culture through discursive, contested patterns.¹⁵

Even within the boundaries of literature itself, competition helped position any author’s literary product in the ‘crowded market’ in which many conflicting voices were fighting for attention (Barker and Christensen 2006, 14). Elton Barker and Joel Christensen have shown in two important contributions (2006 and 2011) how intergeneric contestation is already visible in Homer.¹⁶ Epic, sympotic, and cultic language and narrative patterns were interrelated from the very beginning of our written literary sources, and the interaction between them fostered literary originality.¹⁷ Poets tried to develop their distinct ‘personal voice’ (Barker and Christensen 2006, 15) within a ‘playful sympotic world’ (*ibid.* 31). This

¹⁵ Kurke 2011, 24, who continues: ‘Thus texts of all kinds offer us the sedimented residue of moments in a dynamic process of struggle or contestation’.

¹⁶ Jauss 1977, 327-358 is still worth reading for a theory of genres in pre-modern societies; on page 327 he stresses that vernacular medieval literature is an especially promising field of studies in that the distinction between authorial singularity and collectivity has not yet been fixed (‘[ein] Versuchsfeld ..., das zwischen den Gegensätzen von Singularität und Kollektivität, von reinem Kunstcharakter und bloßer Zweckbedingtheit der Literatur liegt’). A similarly fluid infrastructure can be also assumed for early Greek poetry. On the utility of Jauss’ genre theory for classical studies see Harrison 2013, 7.

¹⁷ Barker 2011 shows how Homer’s *Iliad* engages with allegedly existing versions of the Theban cycle, incorporating and changing its material in order to ‘build up its own [*sc.* the *Iliad*’s] pre-eminence’ (38).

means that already the *princeps litterarum* Homer is not only the target of literary *aemulatio* but also the protagonist of poetic *eris*.¹⁸

The competitive nature of literary infrastructure in early Greece was good for all parties: for the audience, in that the poet's rivalry produced innovative poetry, and for the poets, in that better poetry helped to foster and even augment the audience's interest in poetry. And emulative contestation remained omnipresent and fruitful in literature throughout antiquity. In cases where literary and personal rivalry overlap, the resulting competition may become slightly more complex but can still show astonishing cohesive effects.¹⁹

A speaking example for this stems from the field of Latin oratory. When Cicero in 46 BCE writes his *Brutus*, a history of Roman eloquence, he compares two exponents for every generation of orators; the two 'compete' for primacy not only as individuals against each other but also as a pair against the oratorical reputations of previous and subsequent generations.²⁰ His own generation is represented by Hortensius and himself. In the passages dealing with Hortensius's rhetoric Cicero is rather critical of his rival, implicitly declaring himself to be the victor (and thus the culmination of oratory in Rome). Yet this competitive rivalry with Hortensius finds a counterpart in the preface of the dialogue, where Cicero stresses not the well known rivalry between the two but their close connection (*Brut.* 1). Indeed he suggests that Hortensius's recent death deprives him of a necessary condition of oratorical competition, i.e., a worthy competitor, 'not an adversary or detractor of my fame but rather a comrade and partner in a glorious struggle' (*non ... adversarium aut*

¹⁸ See also the stimulating book by Levaniouk 2011, esp. 324-325 on the challenging task of defining the 'context' for the dialogue between Penelope and Odysseus in *Iliad* 19: it is Homer's narrative, of course, but also 'a landscape of tradition, or rather, of many cooperating and competing traditions that contribute to the formation of the Homeric epic': other epic poetry, myth, cult, lament, etc.

¹⁹ Simmel 1992, 284-382 ('Der Streit') is still fundamental; see recently Hölkeskamp 2014, 34-38.

²⁰ For more discussion of such fictive competitions see Ham, de Jonge, and Zadorozhnyi in this volume.

*obtrectatorem laudum mearum sed socium potius et consortem gloriosi laboris, Brut. 2).*²¹

The simultaneous presence of and tension between divisive and cohesive effects visible in this passage and in many of those that are discussed in this volume is reflected in our title, *Eris vs. aemulatio*.

2. Defining and Evaluating Competition

Competition, in addition to being omnipresent, is also multifaceted, a factor that complicates its definition and evaluation; it will become clear that defining competition always requires two or more different perspectives on each of its main features, depending on whether it is viewed as primarily beneficial or harmful. In what follows, therefore, our cumulative definition of competition in the Greco-Roman world is interwoven with reflections about ancient evaluations of its characteristics.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2010, ad loc.), competition is ‘the activity or condition of striving to gain or win something by defeating or establishing superiority over others’. The lexicographer, like Hesiod in the famous passage about good Eris and bad Eris that is something of a leitmotiv in this volume, makes doubling central to the concept: activity or condition, gain or win, defeating or establishing superiority, others and (implicitly) self. The only singleton here is the prize, the ‘something’.

²¹ Cf. Bakewell in this volume on Plato confronting the problem of ‘how to transform an individual’s striving for renown into something that will benefit rather than harm the broader community’ and, more abstractly, the Platonic distinction cited by Marlein van Raalte (*per litteras*) ‘between (A) φιλονικία between human rivals — in which case the one (party) may become the better of the other — and (B) φιλονικία as the (ideally) common strife to find the truth through dialectics, in which case victory is on the part of λόγος (e.g., *Gorg.* 505e4–5)’.

The prize is a focusing device.²² Xenophon expresses this well in the *Memorabilia*: “thinking the same things beautiful and pleasant, they fight and oppose one another in rivalry over them” (τά τε γὰρ αὐτὰ καλὰ καὶ ἡδέα νομίζοντες ὑπὲρ τούτων μάχονται καὶ διχογνωμονοῦντες ἐναντιοῦνται, *Mem.* 2.6.21). In fact, Georges-Jean Pirault has stressed that the similarity of the Greek terms for ‘prize’, ἄθλον, and ‘contest’, ἄθλος, suggests that, in Greece at least, a contest without prizes would be unthinkable. But prizes come in all shapes and sizes. They can be quantifiable or symbolic (or both), winner-take-all or extensible, lasting or ephemeral, gained or won, and so on. Not surprisingly, the nature of the prize (especially, perhaps, its scarcity), and the nature of the competition itself (does it involve defeating or establishing superiority?²³) are generally linked: for a philosopher such as Aristotle, for example, as Christopher Gill (2003, 36) has shown, the ultimate external prize, honor, should result from the highest internal quality, magnanimity.

The prizes discussed in the present volume range from the concrete (a vessel, an animal, a marriage, the spoils of war) to the conceptual (honor, status, pride, memory). The connection between the prize and the underlying ideology is particularly salient in the funeral games of *Iliad* 23, discussed by Bierl, where some of Achilles’ awards complicate the meaning of victory and call into question the efficacy of competition itself as method of ranking. But it is also evident in the exhortation that concludes Plato’s *Republic*, cited by Bakewell: Socrates urges his interlocutors to ‘collect the prizes (ἄθλα) of justice and be led around like victors (νικηφόροι)’ (621c7-d1); these are no ordinary prizes. Ideology is likewise fundamental to the ‘moralized critiques of short-order wealth’ discussed by Bernard. An unambiguously negative attitude towards prizes is on view in Kuin’s paper on Aristotle’s

²² For a sound treatment and for parallels in Vedic hymns see Pinault 2006.

²³ See van Wees 2011, 2 for the prize as the distinguishing feature between competitions oriented towards gaining objects or goods and those oriented towards gaining superiority or glory.

critique of a proposal by Hippodamus of Miletus to establish a competition to encourage political innovation: giving prizes for new laws, even if the innovation was beneficial, would destabilize the *polis*, regardless of the nature of the prize. The immaterial prizes that result from less structured competitions—the slightly malign pleasure one imagines in those responsible for the graphic or lexicographical ‘capping’ discussed by Steiner and Zadorojnyi, for example, or the family brand promoted by Tertia Aemilia in the female status competition discussed by Webb, or the cultural pride in seeing ‘your’ orator ranked above ‘theirs’, as in the fictive competitions between Demosthenes and Cicero discussed by de Jonge—seem to be less problematic for society.

Next, the competitors. In the simplest scenario the other is much like oneself. A hero vies with another hero one-on-one, for example, and a bucolic singer with another bucolic singer. But other contests of like-on-like are multilateral: thus liturgists vie with liturgists, professionals with other professionals, their *antitechnitai*, and Roman elite men and women with their peers. Also relevant is the so-called N-effect, which captures the idea that the more numerous the competitors (=N), the lower the quality and intensity of the competition (Garcia and Tor, 2009).

Here again the papers in the present volume put pressure on the definition with useful results. Bierl, for example, acknowledges Homer’s ‘sportscaster-like’ focus on one-on-one competitions in the chariot race but highlights the disconcerting effect of Achilles’ award of prizes to heroes, such as Nestor, who were not competitors. Plato, as Bakewell shows, is even more sparing in his celebration of the competitors ranked ‘golden’ in Kallipolis, emphasizing instead the brotherhood of Kallipolis’s citizens. Furthermore, the temporal reference of the gerunds ‘defeating’ and ‘establishing superiority over’ is remarkably flexible. In the elite status competitions discussed by Bernard and Webb, for example, the rivals are both contemporaries (such as the consuls of 293 BCE) and temporally disjunct generations (such as

Quinta Claudia and Clodia Metelli); intergenerational rivalry is of course a staple of ancient thinking, as in the example from Cicero's *Brutus* mentioned above. The degree to which differences between competitors align with other social or cultural divisions has a major impact on the stakes of a competition, as Rosen shows in his discussion of the heated rhetoric of physicians' rivalry with 'religious healers, drug-sellers, and a variety of medical poseurs'. A specific category of 'different' is on view in the literary rivalries discussed by Baraz, Ham, de Jonge, and Zadorojnyi. Literary predecessors worthy of emulation are often temporally and culturally distant, but because the emulator wants to align himself with the predecessor, they are also close and significant, whether the emulation be direct or vicarious. Such rivalries are often therefore rather emotional, as well. Indeed in the bucolic genre, as Baraz argues, the frustrations of rivalry with generic predecessors generate an attempt to destroy the genre itself. The frustrations with the inherently unequal contest between patron and craftsman for architectural glory discussed by Siwicki, on the other hand, lead to ingenious and successful changes of venue.

The definition's 'activity' and 'condition' categories, too, cover a lot of semantic territory, ranging from the hotly contested chariot race discussed by Bierl, to the 'placement-dependent eristic word play' discussed by Steiner, in which each successive writer aims to have 'the last word', and on to the 'collaborative creativity' constitutive of the bucolic contests discussed by Baraz. The categories also needs to make room for the indirection of contests such as those in Plato's Kallipolis, discussed by Bakewell, where competition was a form of testing and the real winner was the *polis* itself, not the individual whose characteristic 'metal' was deemed to be gold.

So far we have mostly exemplified some features of competition highlighted by the *Oxford Dictionary of English*. Useful as the definition is, however, it elides several features that were important in ancient competitions. First the framework within which the contestants

engage their rivals, be it institutional, literary, or social. Agreeing on rules means setting boundaries for otherwise unbounded competition. When *eris* is transformed and sublimated into an agonistic game, it is of crucial importance that the players agree on the following questions:²⁴ What are the rules of the game? How explicit are they? Are they fair? Are they binding? Is the contest recurrent or once-in-a-lifetime? Who is in the audience? and Is defeat survivable? Furthermore, the legitimacy of any victory depends in large part on the framework of the competition, as does its impact on the community.²⁵

A number of the papers in this volume consider the role and evaluation of ancient frameworks real and metaphorical. The dramatic competitions at Athens naturally loom large. Taplin looks at how Aristotle delegitimizes the civic framework, while Bakewell shows Plato using it as a metaphor for literary criticism when Adeimantus and Glaucon adopt the role of ‘gatekeepers’ to the competition, saying that they ‘will not give a chorus’ to an author whose work they consider harmful to the city. The potential for harm to the city likewise motivates Aristotle’s rejection, discussed by Kuin, of a proposal to establish a formal competition in political innovation. A similarly conservative attitude towards the potentially disruptive effect of competition is discussed by Webb, who shows how an important field of women’s competition, namely, ‘the conspicuous display of elite female transport and adornment’, was at one point restricted by law at Rome. The framework of the bucolic song contest is of central concern to Baraz’s paper as she traces the increasingly explicit tension between

²⁴ Hölkeskamp 2010, 103. Sublimation is particularly evident in the bucolic poems discussed by Baraz, in the which song contest proper is preceded by a free-form squabble: ‘the contest is a means of resolving the conflict by providing transition to a different sphere’.

²⁵ For the importance of consensus about the rules of political competition in republican Rome see Hölkeskamp 2010, 103. Whether one stresses competition or cooperation as the core of Roman political culture seems a question of taste; see Russell 2013, 101-115 for a nuanced view on the practical challenges and opportunities that the rivalrous mode of Roman politics inflicted on the tribunes of people in Rome.

amoeban exchange and the more adversarial real-world competitions to which the poems allude (single combat, trials, athletic games). Scodel, on the other hand, discusses some examples of socially constructive competition in Homer, where the rivalry is carefully bounded by pre-existing conditions such as relationships (Nausicaa and her attendants, Telemachus and his father) or circumstances (the imminence of battle); informal frameworks such as these, or the economic markets discussed by Scodel and Bernard, or the ethical codes discussed by Rosen and Zadorojnyi, are as important to consider in assessing ancient attitudes to competition as their more formal real-world and literary counterparts.

Another feature elided in the definition quoted above is the judges, whose importance was already stressed by Hesiod: Sonia Darthou (2008, 273) observes that in *Theogony* the verb *krinein*, ‘to distinguish’ or ‘to judge’, often appears in close connection to *eris*. The institution of judges can be seen as an attempt to control the forces of rupture and aggression by shifting the competition so that it is not (or not only) directed *against* the fellow competitor but (or but also) *towards* the judging third, making success in the eyes of the judges the ultimate aim of the competitor, not the wish to defeat the opponent.

Who, then are the judges? As the papers presented here show, some contests are judged by experts, some by authority figures, and some by the crowd—and the future is the ultimate arbiter. But the judges do not escape criticism; it becomes clear that they (and their critics) have their own stakes in the outcome of the contest. The clearest example of the expert judge comes in Zadorojnyi’s paper on Pollux’s *Onomasticon*, in which the sophist assumes the role of judge (but also competitor!) in the ‘competition for control over language’, a competition in which the philological prize often goes to ‘the more ambitious usage’. The experts’ stake is even clearer in de Jonge’s paper on fictive competitions between Demosthenes and Cicero, a favorite exercise with critics, who, if Greek, subtly give the palm to Demosthenes, while Quintilian boldly promotes the claims of his fellow Roman Cicero.

The critique of rival judges is particularly explicit in a passage from Aristotle's *Poetics* discussed in Taplin's paper on the philosopher's scorn for dramatic victories that were awarded on the basis of crowd-pleasing *opsis*, 'spectacle', rather than a play's other components, which Aristotle considered more germane to *poiêsis*. Aristotle, it emerges, sets himself up as an alternative prize-giver, one who can bestow esteem, if not victory, on playwrights he admires. The problematic audience returns in Baraz's paper on the development of the bucolic genre from Theocritus to Calpurnius Siculus. In the latest poems the audience has mushroomed from a passerby into 'the entire locality at every level' amid quarrels about the proper locus of aesthetic judgment. In his discussion of physicians' appeals for expert and popular approbation alike Rosen shows how the judges' task was complicated by the lack of clear criteria for success: the claims of medical efficacy, money, professionalism, panache, and altruism are all heard. Whereas Rosen's doctors are primarily focused on contemporary judges, Siwicki's architects, competing with the political elite in a contest they could not win, turned to the future as the ultimate arbiter: viewers of the funerary monuments on which architects asserted their claims to renown for their buildings and, even more ambitiously, readers of the *De Architectura*, a treatise in which Vitruvius gave credit to architects, not rulers, for notable buildings.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the emotions with which competition is associated.²⁶ Underneath the definition's terms 'striving', 'defeating', and 'superiority' passions roil. Hesiod mentions several emotions from the negative spectrum, including resentment and jealousy, and Scodel explains how they work in context, but competition can also generate positive emotions such as hope (in those who look to the future as arbiter) and even exaltation (some of Steiner's graffiti could have been printed with exclamation marks: 'Enpedokles

²⁶ See Thalmann 2004, 380 on the emotions: For 'rivalry, jealousy, and hatred are potentially by-products of any form that *eris*, seen as a unity, might take, from war to athletic or economic competition'.

carved these things And he danced, by Apollo!’ or ‘Pheidip(p)idas fucked. Timagoras and Enperes and I—we fucked too!’). The ancients were attentive to the emotional concomitants of competition at its extreme: the anger of Antilochus, discussed by Bierl, the shame that Cicero, as Webb shows, wanted to (pretend to) arouse in Clodia Metelli, the hatred that one of Rosen’s physicians actually did want to arouse against a rival quack, the personal abuse between sophists that, as Zadorojnyi shows, Pollux disapproved of, and the *furor* and *insania* mentioned by Calpurnius Siculus and discussed by Baraz. One can certainly find attempts to limit competition’s social cost by moving the competition inward, or even by encouraging competition with an abstraction or with oneself instead of with others. As Scodel observes, ‘it is the peculiarity of the competition in work and thus in success that the competition is mainly in the mind of the competitor’. Seneca, who draws an explicit analogy between athletic competition and the development of the inner self, shows something of the dynamics (*Ep.* 13.3): ‘Thus, to pursue that analogy, Fortune often got the better of you, but you did not surrender; rather, you leapt up and made a more determined stand. For virtue, when challenged, makes itself greater’ (*ergo, ut similitudinem istam prosequare, saepe iam fortuna supra te fuit, nec tamen tradidisti te, sed subsiluisti et acrior constitisti; multum enim adicit sibi virtus lacessita*). On a larger scale, *stasis* threatens, and, apropos of Plato’s *stasis*-reducing provisions for Kallipolis, Bakewell argues that ‘the city’s success hinges on its ability to limit and manage competition on multiple levels’.

3. Representational Competition

We can go a step further in supplementing the dictionary definition by considering the degree to which competition is real or representational, an aspect of competition that is often crucial

for its evaluation. Being confronted with unregulated strife might be unsettling, but seeing it staged or perceiving it in artistic or literary representations can have a pedagogical effect. The contrast between representation (e.g., in the theater at Athens or at panhellenic festivals) and reality (e.g., the stubborn competitiveness of political leaders who led Roman citizens to take up arms against each other in the course of the first century BCE) is stark. The tension between these paradigms was at the core of philosophical warnings against competition such as those issued by Plato or, even more radically, by the Stoics and Epicureans.²⁷ Yet not even Plato can dismiss competition completely. Bakewell explores Plato's intriguing representation of competition in the *Republic* against the backdrop of Athenian society, especially the opportunities of social ascent for residents who by birth were not likely to become political players. On the other hand, real life can also make philosophers deeply sceptical about the usefulness of even institutionalized and representational competition, as Taplin shows with regard to Aristotle's critique of *opsis* in his *Poetics*.

What do we mean by representational? In a fascinating study Elton Barker (2009, 372) remarks with regard to the Athenian context that 'Representations of debate ... reproduce dissent from authority and help construct an agonistic mentality by which one may perform as a citizen'.²⁸ His observation brings to the fore several important aspects of representational competition.

First, the notion of authority. Authoritative models from the past who engaged in strife can serve as legitimation and inspiration for later competitors in setting up their own agonistic game. In the field of literature, for example, Ham shows how Ovid reworked Hesiod's doubling of Eris in his *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* and developed it as a source of

²⁷ See the useful overview in Gill 2003.

²⁸ Cf. also Darthou 2008, 275: 'Si le conflit est une phase de rupture, il permet aussi de définir la place de chacun'.

poetic invention, while de Jonge's chapter on imperial rhetoricians concludes that their fictive *agôn* about the models of Greek and Roman prose invites the latter generation to respond in an emulative way to the challenges offered by past perfection. But contemporary authorities (both individuals and institutions), too, can legitimate competition. Who is authoritative enough to judge (or end) competition or to set its rules and boundaries? We have already seen that Aristotle presents himself as such an authority in the *Poetics*. In Siwicki's paper we encounter architects who challenge the authority of political leaders on the field of representative architecture and claim their own aesthetic authority and responsibility, but we also find their wish to co-operate in a client-patron relationship. Within the boundaries of the text, Bierl's chapter shows how Homer's Achilles, in many ways the model of an *eris*-driven character, acts in *Iliad* 23 as a mild judge who encourages competition in clearly defined contests and settles any swelling emotions before they become dangerous personal enmity.

Barker also stresses the importance of the medium in which competition is represented: in what media do we accept strife, and where is it unwanted? Many chapters in this volume offer unusual answers to this question of the medium, including the rupestral inscriptions discussed by Steiner, the ceremonies in which, as Webb argues, Roman elite women competed with each other, and the lexica that Zadorojnyi shows to be a good medium for competition among philologically-inclined intellectuals. Furthermore, representation always involves adopting a specific role, an agonistic persona.²⁹ Webb shows this nicely for Roman elite women, whose competition is 'staged' according to *exempla* from the past. One might posit that competition becomes dangerous at the moment in which role-playing is put aside and unmediated emotions surface.

Third, Barker reminds us that representations of competition are dialogical in nature and therefore open-ended: they invite everyone who perceives them (as spectator, visitor, or

²⁹ For the importance of role-playing see Hölkeskamp 2010, 102.

reader) to replicate the spirit of good Eris for themselves. In fictional contests (Demosthenes vs. Cicero, Quinta Claudia vs. Clodia Metelli; competition with ancestors) everybody wins. As Seneca puts it, intergenerational rivalry increases humanity's patrimony (*Ep.* 64.7):³⁰

I admire philosophy's discoveries and their discoverers; it is a pleasure to be in the presence of, so to speak, the patrimony of the multitude. It was for me that these concepts were acquired and worked up. But let me play the part of a good head of household: let me multiply what I received. May a larger inheritance go from me to my posterity!

Veneror ... inventa sapientiae inventoresque; adire tamquam multorum hereditatem iuvat. Mihi ista acquisita, mihi laborata sunt. Sed agamus bonum patrem familiae, faciamus ampliora quae accepimus; maior ista hereditas a me ad posteros transeat.

In the case of the intercultural rivalry between great orators, de Jonge argues that it benefits both the critics (Caecilius of Caleacte, Plutarch, [Longinus], Quintilian) and the critics' audiences, who are in effect supporting 'their' team, as in a sporting event; the literary contest between Greeks and Romans is more fun if you are participating. From this perspective representational competitions occur in an open-ended, discursive framework that stimulates negotiation about the status quo.³¹

The tension between real and representational competition is well illustrated by Lucretius. In line with his Epicurean values, he does not want to engage in the typical Roman

³⁰ See on intergenerational emulation in this letter Tutrone 2014, 248-251.

³¹ Cf. van Nijf 2012, 70: watching spectacles was 'a phase in an ongoing *process of social and political negotiation*' (our emphasis).

competition for glory, as that would harm the balance of the soul and disturb his inner peace. Yet watching others competing for glory from a safe distance has philosophical utility, as it helps the spectator realize how agreeable it is to stay away from the struggle (Lucretius 2.7-13):

But nothing is sweeter than staying in a lofty temple well fortified by the serene knowledge of the wise, whence you can look down on others and see them wandering widely and seeking a road in life's uncertainties, using intellect in their struggles and nobility in their battles, striving night and day with intense effort to win the greatest wealth and become powerful.

sed nihil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre
errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

Lucretius' language, replete with the terminology of competition, reveals a fascination with the competitive culture of the Romans, and can be read as simultaneously a critique of competition and a Hegelian 'sublation' (*Aufheben*) of it. The same nuanced evaluation is visible in Lucretius' attitude to his philosophic and literary models. On the one hand he declares that Epicurus reached a godlike status *qua* philosopher, and that his successors will only be able to retell what he has envisaged; in other words, Lucretius eschews *aemulatio* and is content to be one of Epicurus' imitators. On the other hand, especially on the metapoetical

level, he engages in an outspoken emulative process, combining (archaic) Ennianism with a clear awareness of modern Callimachean poetics: his repeated statements that he is the first who has dared to explain Epicurean thought in verse recalls the traditional Roman competitive discourse in which, as Bernard among others shows here, being the first or only one to do something is part of the quest for glory.³²

Lucretius's limited acceptance of competition—as a path to literary glory, not knowledge of the universe—provides a useful caveat against the modern inclination to connect competition with (the wish for) innovation. For Greco-Roman antiquity innovation was not self-evidently desirable.³³ Scodel in her chapter argues that Hesiod, for example, shows no interest in innovation in farming and was perhaps not even aware that innovation in this area (as opposed to poetry) was possible. Aristotle's evaluation of innovation in politics, however, as Kuin shows in her chapter on *Politics 2*, is more complicated. While being sceptical about the value of political competition as such, Aristotle nevertheless tries to be innovative in his political program. But in order to be able to 'sell' the novelty of a political procedure, he invents a tradition to which he can connect it. Such traditionalism could easily be promoted as a philosophically superior model of behavior. It is certainly promoted as a philologically superior model by Pollux, who, as Zadorojnyi argues, prides himself on pursuing '[lexical] innovation by means of archaic vocabulary'. Not only in Greece but

³² On Lucretius' innovative (and self-confident) poetics, see Gale 2005 and Nethercut (forthcoming). For a Lucretian 'first' see the proem to book 4 of *De rerum natura* (esp. 4.3-5: 'it gives pleasure to pick new flowers and to seek a distinguished crown for my head from a place whence the Muses have as yet wreathed no one's brow', *iuvat novos decerpere flores / insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam / unde prius nulli velarit tempora Musae); cf., e.g., the *laudatio Metelli* (quoted by Plin. *HN* 7.139, for which see also Bernard in this volume) 'who was the first to lead elephants in triumph after his victory in the first Punic War' (*qui primus elephantos ex primo Punico bello duxit in triumpho*).*

³³ Cf. van Wees 2011, 5: competition for superiority in antiquity was not always 'progress-driven'.

especially in Rome the past, venerated as *mos maiorum*, was thought to give legitimacy to present actions; '[o]n a functional level, it could serve to constitute identity for individuals, groups or even whole states', as the preface to a previous Penn-Leiden volume has put it.³⁴ No wonder, then, that not only the elite but also professionals had recourse to such conservatism. Rosen shows how Greek physicians defended their own authority in the field of healing not only with reference to their success in medical care but also through the foregrounding of medically-irrelevant but traditional ethical concepts. On the other hand, one cannot deny that competition fostered innovation even in antiquity. Bernard's chapter among others shows how new economic realities changed the strategies used by the Roman political elites of the mid-republic in competing with each other.³⁵ And even Hesiod, however scant his interest in agricultural innovation, competes with predecessors and contemporaries—Scodel refers to his victory in the poetic *agôn* in Chalcis (*Theog.* 656-659)—in his attempt to write innovative poetry.³⁶

Given the essentially representational character of most examples of competition discussed in this volume, it is worth asking whether cooperation, which is often taken to be competition's opposite, is in fact rather its precondition, as is suggested by Marcus Aurelius:

³⁴ Ker and Pieper (eds.) 2014, 3.

³⁵ See also Roller 2009 for an analysis of the innovative, non-martial way in which Appius Claudius Caecus tried to win his portion of public renown.

³⁶ Not to mention the fact that later generations imagined that his rival in Chalcis would have been Homer. The story of the 'Contest between Homer and Hesiod' (an imperial text that, however, goes back to similar ones from at least the fourth century BCE) shows how deeply later Greek imagination connected (creative) agonistic principles to the founding fathers of their literature; Koning 2010, 268 interprets the important role of the judges in the *Certamen* as reflecting 'the appropriation of the poets by all layers of society *throughout* antiquity' (emphasis is his) and thus as a metaphor for their ability to elicit constant emulation. Collins 2004, 185-191 reads the *Certamen* as reflecting the actual rhapsodes' ability to improvise hexametric verses, partly with the aim of epic parody.

‘we were born to work together, ... like rows of teeth, upper and lower’ (γεγόναμεν γὰρ πρὸς συνεργίαν, ὡς πόδες, ὡς χεῖρες, ὡς βλέφαρα, ὡς οἱ στοῖχοι τῶν ἄνω καὶ κάτω ὀδόντων, *Med.* 2.1). However one evaluates competition—and the papers in the present volume show how complex that evaluation must be—it is good to think that the competitive and the cooperative are not mutually exclusive. The editors, at least, have a lively sense of how the overlap plays out in practice, as we indicate in the Acknowledgments below.

4. In This Volume

The above-mentioned omnipresence of competition in the Greco-Roman world means that comprehensive coverage of the topic is impossible in a volume such as this. Instead, the papers presented here focus on ancient *evaluations* of competition, starting in Part I with Hesiod’s fundamental bifurcation of the earlier concept of *eris*, which had a largely negative value, into a pair of entities, one of which had a beneficial effect and was accorded a positive value. The papers in Parts II and III then explore this bifurcation in a variety of ancient contexts, literary, philosophical, political, economic, artistic, and professional.

Part I. Eris Reimagined

Hesiod’s Erides are the subject of Part I, which contains Ruth Scodel’s discussion of the seminal *Works and Days* passage (*Op.* 11-28) in which Hesiod announces his insight that the harmful *eris* familiar from Homer and *Theogony*, a ‘grievous goddess’, has a beneficial counterpart, at least in the environment most relevant to the concerns of his poem, where she is an ‘aid to men’. In ‘Hesiodic *Eris* and the Market’ Scodel examines Hesiod’s

psychological insight that competition for public respect might be a better motivator for farmers than the pursuit of food security. After reviewing the various forms of *eris* found in the Homeric epics, including some instances of win-win competition, she provides a detailed analysis of the famous passage on the two Erides in *Works and Days* (*Op.* 11-28), which she takes to be Hesiod's revision of the account of Eris given in *Theogony* (*Theog.* 226-231). Scodel discusses the particular relevance of good Eris for Hesiod's farmer, who participates in a market different in kind from the markets used by the other competitors mentioned by Hesiod (beggars, potters, bards), showing that the socially constructive Eris situated in the world of Hesiod's farmer had no place in the world described in the Homeric epics and therefore no dedicated word in early Greek.

Part II. Ambivalence, Critique, Resistance

The second part of the volume opens with Anton Bierl's analysis of an extended episode of Homeric competition. In 'Agonistic Excess and Its Ritual Resolution in Hero Cult. The Funeral Games in *Iliad* 23 as a *mise en abyme*' Bierl offers an analysis of the funeral games for Patroclus, paying particular attention to how Achilles acts 'out of character' in restraining excessively agonistic behavior by concessions, arbitration, and generosity. The detailed description of the chariot race, in Bierl's reading, provides a *mise en abyme* reflection of and contrast to events that occurred earlier in the poem, and the games as a whole simultaneously 'affirm and undermine the central aristocratic ideology of being the best'. The episode also shows Achilles, once arch-competitor but now *agônothetês*, anticipating his future status as the object of hero cult. A different refraction of heroic competition provides the subject matter for Yelena Baraz's paper 'Certare alterno carmine. The Rise and Fall of Bucolic Competition'. Baraz argues that bucolic competition, as the literary tradition develops,

increasingly evokes more consequential modes of competition (military, forensic) and attracts an ever-larger audience. In Calpurnius' 6th Eclogue, in fact, his competing shepherds are 'quasi-epic fighters' threatening to come to blows over aesthetic values before a crowd of spectators from the human and natural worlds. In bringing out the violence latent but never actualized in the earlier tradition, Baraz shows, Calpurnius renders the central conceit of bucolic poetry, the amicable singing contest, unstable and henceforth unworkable.

These two studies of literary instantiations of (at best) ambivalence about competition are followed by a pair—such 'pairing' was built into the original conference program—devoted to philosophical critiques. Geoffrey W. Bakewell, in 'Stasis, Competition, and the "Noble Lie". Metic Mettle in Plato's *Republic*', reads the *Republic* through the lens of competition established by the dialogue's narrative frame, showing that when justice is defined as 'holding and taking care of one's own, and of oneself' (rather than the more traditional 'helping friends and harming enemies') competition becomes almost irrelevant and 'victory itself undesirable', at least for the individual concerned, however beneficial it may be for society as a whole. As context for the philosophical argument Bakewell looks at the 'noble lie' of Plato's metallurgical analogy for social classes in relation to the social structure of contemporary Athens, showing that the desirability of the limited social mobility allowed in Kallipolis is exemplified in the dialog by Polemarchus, a metal-producer-metic who contributes significantly to the philosophical project. Competition, it is argued, has a legitimate—if narrowly circumscribed—function in Kallipolis in the sorting and testing processes necessitated by discrepancies between birth and character. Another nuanced treatment of competition is discussed by Inger N.I. Kuin in 'Competition and Innovation in Aristotle, *Politics 2*', which looks at Aristotle's critique of competition in the context of politics, focusing on his rejection of a proposal by Hippodamus of Miletus to foster political innovation by means of a competition for civic honors rewarding the discovery/invention of

something beneficial for the state. An institutionalized honor, by providing a new incentive for innovation, would increase the frequency of innovations, which in Aristotle's view destabilize the constitution even if they are per se beneficial. Aristotle's own innovative proposal, Kuin shows, is carefully framed as a revival, not an innovation.

The next two papers focus on problematic aspects of real-world competitions. In 'Aristotle's *Poetics* and *skênikoi agônes*' Oliver Taplin sets Aristotle's comments on performance, *opsis*, against the background of contemporary performance practices in the Greek world, attested in a variety of sources including inscriptions, speeches, and Platonic dialogues. All venues involved competition, and in the fourth century actors came into particular prominence, including in Aristotle's one reference to his own experience of tragedy in performance. Aristotle seems not to have approved of the resulting dramatic experience, which could be vulgar and sensational, as in the performances of Callipides 'the (so-called) ape'. Furthermore, competition affected *opsis* more than Aristotle's other five dramatic *mere* owing to its capacity for pleasing the audience and festival judges, with the result that dramatic competitions designed to pick the best play ended up picking the most spectacular play, including some of Euripides'. In Aristotle's view, Taplin shows, the limitations of the audience limit the degree to which competition can be a spur to excellence. Ralph Rosen discusses competition in the ancient health-care marketplace, where physicians vied with one another and with other healers to establish their own credibility and commodify the service they provided. In 'Paradoxes and Anxieties of Competition in Hippocratic Medicine' he analyses competitive polemic in the Hippocratic texts, focusing on the tension between altruism and self-promotion, and argues that the texts attempt to establish values for the profession superior to those of the ignorant and unregulated marketplace: *philanthropia*, not *philotimia*.

Part III. Multivalence, Displacement, Innovation

The final part of the volume develops Hesiod's idea that good Eris is 'in the roots of the earth' (*Op.* 19) with papers that explore a variety of ancient scenarios in which competition is artistically and/or socially productive. In 'Sleights of Hand. Epigraphic Capping and the Visual Enactment of *Eris* in Early Greek Epigrams' Deborah Steiner looks at early inscriptions that use 'graphic battles' to perpetuate a victory in one competition in a new competitive arena. First, the neatly incised inscription on the Dipylon *oinochoe* (perhaps the prize for a dancing competition), which is read as a cleverly allusive reflection of the delicate and victorious choral dance, is capped by a subsequent epigraphic performance that fills the empty space and satisfies the demands of symmetry. Second, graffiti from Thera, in which primacy goes to the best writer, despite the fact that the original arena of competition involved fornicating and dancing. Third: the painted inscriptions in which the painter Parrhasius, using the metaphor of an athletic prize for his technical prowess, claims *habrosyne* and invincibility and attracts thereby a rebuttal. Particularly notable here is the tendency of victors to extend their claims to primacy into new venues. The next paper, Christopher Siwicki's 'Roman Architects and the Struggle for Fame in an Unequal Society', takes us from multivalent to displaced competitions. Siwicki discusses the unequal contest between a building's patron and its builder for the glory of the architectural achievement. Architects, Siwicki shows, bested in the contemporary status competition, aimed for victory in the future and often presented their claims not in the buildings themselves but in other venues such as tombs and texts. The Flavian buildings depicted on the tomb of the Haterii, for example, constitute an 'iconographic *res gestae*' for Haterius Tychicus, who airbrushes out the imperial patrons by providing topographic rather than dedicatory identifiers.

Vitruvius's basilica at Fanum is commemorated *sans* patron in the *De Architectura*, and Augustus is written out of several Augustan buildings.

These papers on competitions evidenced (mostly) in the material record are followed by a pair focusing on Roman history and elite competition, male and female, for status. In 'Political Competition and Economic Change in Mid-Republican Rome' Seth Bernard explores the economic dimension of political competition in mid-republican Rome, arguing that economic behavior was determined by social and political ideologies. More specifically, he looks at the rivalry between two forms of wealth—long-term symbolic wealth associated with the aristocratic class and short-term wealth obtained through military conquest—as it plays out in, e.g., the dueling triumphs of Papirius Cursor and Spurius Carvilius (*cons.* 293 BCE), showing that the terms of the status competition change in tandem with the underlying economic realities. Bernard then considers the material record of market exchange, including coinage, the system of production for the urban market of Rome, and the availability of commodities, such as wine, associated with elite lifeways, concluding that the rise of the competitive political aristocracy and the transformation of the mid-republican economy are best understood as parts of the same historical process. The following paper is devoted to the neglected topic of female status competition. Lewis Webb, in '*Mihi es aemula*. Elite Female Status Competition in Mid-Republican Rome and the Example of Tertia Aemilia', shows, contrary to Livy 34.7.8, that women competed in domains beyond those of *munditiae*, *ornatus*, and *cultus*. *Sacra publica* were a particularly prominent venue for female competition, but others existed, including euergetism and public funerals. After discussing the competitive 'moves' made by the well born and well married Tertia Aemilia (d. 163/2) and the contrasting behavior of Papiria, who did not have the wherewithal to compete and so withdrew, Webb argues that elite female status competition was a form of gentile 'brand-management'.

The volume concludes as it began, with literary competitions. Charles T. Ham's 'The Poetics of Strife and Competition in Hesiod and Ovid' offers an analysis of the fertility of discord in Hesiod, whose Erides are interpreted as a discordant doublet of the concordant Muses inspiring 'competition, contradiction, and dissent', and in Ovid, whose doubling of *lis* in *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses* both nods to and vies with Hesiod's conceptual innovation. The productive literary rivalries sketched here make a striking contrast with the bucolic competition discussed by Baraz, a genre in which the literary form proves unable to sustain the rivalry it generates. In 'Demosthenes *versus* Cicero. Intercultural Competition in Ancient Literary Criticism' Casper C. de Jonge fulfils the promise implicit in our volume's title, considering directly a competition between Greece and Rome. He analyses the multiform metaphor of the 'author A vs. author B' contest in ancient literary criticism, devoting particular attention to *synkriseis*, specifically the *synkrisis* of Demosthenes and Cicero. Four versions of this fictive contest are treated here, three Greek (Caecilius, Plutarch, Longinus), one Roman (Quintilian). These comparisons, de Jonge shows, are simultaneously competing with other comparisons of the two orators and engaging their audiences in a lively and contemporarily-relevant intercultural contest. Like its two predecessors, the last paper in the volume is concerned with an author who simultaneously discusses and engages in literary *aemulatio*. In 'Competition and Competitiveness in Pollux's *Onomasticon*' Alexei Zadorojnyi looks at the *Onomasticon* as a repository of cultural values, including those pertinent to competition, against a background of Second-Sophistic *philotimia*. He argues that Pollux sees himself as engaging in intellectual euergetism, since his lexicon illustrates ways of using lexical prowess in pursuit of *time*: an expression that is 'more ambitious' (φιλοτιμότερον) will serve his readers well in their lexical contests with fellow sophists. Zadorojnyi suggests that these ambitious usages involve innovations on classical precedents.

We suggested at the beginning of this Introduction that on the topic of *eris*—as, indeed in the “Contest between Homer and Hesiod” cited by a number of our authors—Hesiod takes first place. As it turns out we can give him the last word, as well, in the context of the Penn-Leiden series, since the tenth Colloquium will move up Hesiod’s genealogical tree from Eris to her mother Night (*Theog.* 225): ‘Between Dusk and Dawn. Valuing Night in Classical Antiquity’.

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